



the campaign for
environmentally responsible
health care

CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS

12355 SUNRISE VALLEY DRIVE
SUITE 680
RESTON, VA 20191
T: 703.860.9790
F: 703.860.9795
EMAIL: INFO@HCWH.ORG
WWW.NOHARM.ORG

Dear Nurse Colleague,

We are excited to be sending you information about the Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) campaign, an international movement that is addressing the occupational and environmental health threats created by the health care sector in which we all work.

There are several major sources of preventable pollution that emanate from hospitals and other clinical settings. Nurses can help to identify the sources in their work settings and develop strategies to reduce them. As a result of HCWH's campaign against mercury-containing products in health care settings such products are used less in facilities, reducing the dual risks of dangerous spills and toxic pollution in the workplace. The campaign has developed several materials to help reduce workplace exposure to toxic chemicals and mitigate hospital waste.

Hospitals use many PVC-containing (polyvinyl chloride) products, which during manufacture and disposal can create dioxin, a known toxic chemical and human carcinogen. The list of health effects associated with dioxins is a growing public health concern. Dioxin exposure is associated with cancer, developmental and reproductive problems, and endocrine disruption. Nurses are in an excellent position to influence several processes that involve PVCs: 1) selection of non-PVC, alternative products; 2) re-use of products whenever possible, thereby reducing waste; and 3) selecting non-incineration processes for disposal of PVC waste.

We also want you to know that nurses are playing a key role in the Health Care Without Harm campaign. You are welcome to explore the campaign's activities through the monthly conference calls of the Nurses Work Group (NWG). We would like to encourage you to join us and "meet" nurses from all over the country who are changing the way we do the business of health care – making it healthier and safer for all. We invite you to join any of the additional Health Care Without Harm groups listed on our website that may interest you. Meanwhile, please check out the Nurses as Environmental Health Activists page at http://www.noharm.org/us_canada/nurses/.

If you have any questions or want to be included on the Nurses Work Group's email listserv, please contact the group's Co-Chairs, Kelli Barber, RN, MN at mablackbear@gmail.com or Mary Margaret Thomas, RN, MSN at marymargaretthomas@gmail.com, who can tie you into the monthly conference calls as well. We very much look forward to hearing from you and working with you on environmental health issues in the near future.

Sincerely,

The Nurses of Health Care Without Harm